

November 12, 2010

Ray LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

As the primary organizations that employ and represent workers in Wisconsin's transportation construction industry, we would like to reiterate what President Obama said in Milwaukee on Labor Day when he unveiled his national infrastructure proposal:

"The folks here in the trades know what I'm talking about – nearly one in five construction workers are unemployed. One in five. Nobody has been hit harder than construction workers. And a lot of those folks, they had lost their jobs in manufacturing and went into construction; now they've lost their jobs again.

"It doesn't do anybody any good when so many hardworking Americans have been idled for months, even years, at a time when there is so much of America that needs rebuilding."

That is why we are appealing to you today to consider alternative infrastructure investments in Wisconsin with the \$810 million in high-speed passenger rail funding granted to the state under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act.

Given the stated intention of Governor-Elect Scott Walker to stop construction on the rail line between Madison and Milwaukee, we believe that funding should be redirected to other pressing infrastructure needs in Wisconsin to help bolster a construction workforce that has seen its ranks decline every year for the past eight years.

If Governor-Elect Walker does stop the project, we endorse his proposal to dedicate the funding to fixing crumbling roads and bridges throughout Wisconsin. A legislative study committee has documented an annual funding shortfall of at least \$1 billion for this core component of our state's transportation system.

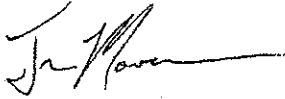
There is a national precedent for allowing states to substitute transportation projects without loss of funds. Under the Interstate Withdrawal and Substitution Program, created by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973, states were allowed to redirect funding to other critical transportation priorities. In addition, funding initially provided for transit improvements in Milwaukee and eastern Waukesha

County was later dedicated to a combination of highway and transit projects, including reconstruction of the Sixth Street Bridge in the Menomonee Valley and the Marquette Interchange, projects that employed thousands of workers in our industry. We are prepared to pursue both of these issues with members of Wisconsin's Congressional delegation.

If redirecting the high-speed rail funding for highways and bridges is not possible, we believe the funding should be used to upgrade track, signals and train sets in the existing Milwaukee-to-Chicago corridor — one of Amtrak's most successful regional routes in the country. This corridor has established a track record of consistent ridership growth, which would only be enhanced through investments that create truly high-speed passenger rail service between the most populous metropolitan areas in the region.

Thank you for your consideration of these proposals to help address critical transportation infrastructure needs while putting workers in a decimated construction industry back to work in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,



Terry McGowan
Business Manager
Intl. Union of Operating Engineers Local 139



Pat Goss
Executive Director
WI Transportation Builders Association



Mark Reihl
Executive Director
WI State Council of Carpenters